

Bitte gehen Sie auf die folgenden Punkte ein:

1. Preparation (Preparation time, Application deadline, what to hand in, information research)

The preparation time for this project was fairly short as I was becoming a third member of an already ongoing project. The accommodation was organised with CORE sea through my Professor Christian Wild and so I only had to organise funding and booking of flights. That meant preparing a research proposal and a timeline of activities in order to apply for scholarships and for CORE sea to know my aims and goals.

2. Formalities in Thailand (Visa, financial solutions = how to pay and was it hard to get money from an ATM?)

The visa for Thailand was easy to organise with a short trip to Hamburg. It was given the same day as long as all the documents were prepared. It was €150 for a multiple entry education visa. CORE sea were very helpful with the visa organisation, also with health insurance tips. All documents needed were sent between emails with efficiency. On arrival money was easy to get hold of with ATMs being everywhere! Therefore, there were no problems with rent payments as it was just a two minute walk to the ATM to withdraw a months rent of 10,00baht (approx €250).

3. General Informations about host institute (where is it and how to get there? Supervisor/person in charge)

CORE sea is situated in Chaloklum Bay on the North coast of Koh Phangan. I arrived there by taking a flight from Bangkok to Koh Samui and then a ferry from Koh Samui to Koh Phangan. Details of how to travel were provided by Eike Schoenig who was there to pick me up at the Koh Phangan ferry terminal.

In general CORE sea is an international, non-profit, non-governmental organisation. They are working with local Thai partners, Department for Marine and Coastal Resources (DMCR), to develop plans, policies and techniques to overcome current challenges in coral reef management on Koh Phangan, Gulf of Thailand. My project supported this partnership by analysing the success of artificial reefs to protect and enhance the services of the surrounding seascape, whilst promoting the values, interests and needs of different reefs users in order to generate knowledge sharing, relationship building and a common management goal. Over the years Eike has built a good relationship with the local community, using the long tail boats and their captains, as well as the dive schools in helping with the snorkeling and dive projects, and the volunteers spend a fair amount in the local bars and restaurants. Thus, building relationships within the local community was pretty easy!

4. Accommodation (How was the accommodation and how much did it cost, what was included and provided?)

The accommodation was great. I shared a large room with two other girls which looked on to the jungle and was parallel to the beach. We were given lockers and the institute includes a kitchen, laboratory, a classroom and two social rooms, as well as a garden. Rent cost approx €250 and included internet, water and electricity. As well as trips to the Ang Thong Marine Park and Sail Rock, two incredible coral reef sites.

5. Miscellaneous (special experiences made?, how safe was it?, Internet?, problems?, any advices?, food/provisions)

The overall experience made at CORE sea was very special. I met amazing people with the same values and goals - to help and support our environment. I was able to contribute to a number of different projects including beach clean ups, as well as getting to know the locals during my surveys and interviews. I spoke to a variety of fisherman, restaurant and dive school owners, all who seemed very dedicated to preserving the marine life on Koh Phangan, which in turn preserves their livelihood. I didn't really have any problems. Sometimes it felt a little crowded as we were living in a house of 10 people or more. And sometimes the internet or electricity was a little slow or cut out but that didn't happen too often. My only struggle was the heat on my first few weeks as I left Germany on -4°C and arrived to Koh Phangan at 34°C! However, in time I acclimatised and realised the times of day when working was just not really possible. My tip for others coming here would be to listen to your body and not push yourself. Drink lots and keep nibbling on food to keep your salts and sugars up. In general, I believe I was very lucky to get this opportunity to study in such a beautiful country and am very grateful for the help I received through PROMOS to enable me to do this.

6. Was ist tunlichst zu vermeiden? (Don't's, what must be avoided)

Things to be avoided are similar to back in Germany; being careful not to walk around by yourself late at night, be aware of dangerous animals in the water such as jellyfish, keeping wounds clean and ensuring to drink and eat plenty. The most important is to listen to your body and if you don't feel 100% take a break.

7. After being back home (--)

Time to put everything together. I have to talk with my other group members in order to see if there are any relationships between our data, comparing the benthic and fish data between artificial and natural reefs and looking at the social aspects between them (my focus). Nevertheless, it is most important to organise my data in order to plan my thesis write-up and to make the most out of the information I have gathered. However, living in Koh Phangan made me realise that you cannot work 24/7 (normally as it was too hot between 12 and 4pm) thus, I would like to bring back this more relaxed way of working. I realised that it helps keep stress levels low and actually made me more productive during the times I was working.

8. **Conclusion** (What experiences did you gain personally? Motivation and aims why going there? Influence of this experience on your further studies/job hunt)

This project 'Socio-ecological assessment of ecosystem services provided by artificial reefs in the Gulf of Thailand' enforced my ambitions to develop relationships between the natural and social sciences. It showed me that nature and people have to work together in order to reach environmental management goals, yet sometimes it's hard to combine the two due to conflicting needs. During the project I constantly found conflicts between those of the different stakeholders, especially between the divers and the fishermen. The experience made at CORE sea only strengthened my ambition to work in conservation. It further improved my knowledge on marine life and how dependent people are on the sea for their livelihoods, and yet how people believe the ocean is at our disposal. I was constantly surprised by the contrast between knowledge and action. For example many of the fishermen told me that healthy corals meant better fishing. Yet many fishing captains also operated snorkel tours, which were unsupervised and therefore, snorkelers were found kicking and standing on the corals. I also experienced one of the fishermen telling me about the beach clean ups he helps with and yet when we were fishing he was throwing the broken plastic fishing lines in the ocean. I also experienced this with the dive operators who had a strict no touch policy with the marine life, yet allowed fun diving. This was where the diver had no certificates, and therefore no control or buoyancy and thus encountered the same problems as the snorkelers. The biggest contradiction I witnessed was with the DMCR, the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources, Thailand. During surveys on the natural reefs (those they are supposed to be protecting) researchers were seen lying and standing on the corals in order to take photographs and undertake fish surveys. Thus, my determination now is to reduce this gap between knowledge and action and to help provide the right resources to do this. The local community of Chaloklum made me feel very welcome and supported the work I was doing. Therefore, now I have a good relationship with this community, I would love to come back and help reduce the gap between knowledge and action and create a common management goal that supports each stakeholder group.

9. **Fotos** of the institute and/or the location.

See next page.

View from bedroom at CORE sea



CORE sea and Chaloklum village



Local beach and fishing boats



My projects...

Left: Fish Team!



Right: Mr Mee (local fishermen)



One of the many beach clean ups in and out of the water



DMCR and CORE sea surveying the concrete artificial reefs and natural reefs on Koh Phangan

